



Introduction

Although this course reflects certain aspects of Christian Mysticism, the principles herein apply regardless of which religious path you are on. The essence of each religion is the sincere seeker who seeks the truth, and when he begins finding it, little by little, he will become aware of a guiding Holy Light that leads him inward and onward upon a mystical path that exceeds all religions. He will begin to realize that the way to dismiss negative influences and temptations is to apply effective spiritual Virtues in his life, which will become a part of his spiritual lifestyle and ongoing walk on this very real Mystical Path.

On the spiritual path of unfoldment, the way of the Esoteric Initiations, aspirants seek the Holy Light of the Christos, or Christ Consciousness, or as some schools call it the Illumination.

The living Virtues of the Soul will make one's journey toward experiencing the Holy Light within that much more accessible. Therefore, this Virtuous Path is an extension and interconnected companion piece to **The Path of the Holy Light**.



Lesson I

A Most Virtuous Path into the Holy Light

When you reach out to touch the hem of the Master's garment, Virtue will issue forth from him to you, and you shall be healed and transformed. Those who sincerely reach out to the Master Jesus Christ shall surely receive him, and he shall bless you and comfort you. When you ask, it shall be given to you. When you seek, you will find. When you knock, he will open the door. Any seekers who come unto him will not thirst, but shall receive his righteousness, for they shall enter the Kingdom of God.

When you follow the Master, he will show you the Way. If you believe in him, know that you can trust him. If you sincerely seek the Holy Light, he will show you the way to it. If you simply keep your eye single, your whole body will be filled with Light.

This Holy Light is not confined to any religion, but you can find it within yourself. There are many masters and teachers of Wisdom throughout the ages whose paths can lead you to this Holy Light, and the Master Jesus is one of them. We offer the Mystical Path and its universal way, for it is found beyond the usual religions, because the way beyond is the Way of the Spirit. Indeed, you can start with your religion of choice, but do not be blinded by its dogma; rather, find the truth within through meditation.

Those who seek the Illumination, seek the Holy Light of the Christos, for the Christos is the Logos, the Word and the Power of God. Realize that Jesus was anointed, or christed, and many others have been so christed. The Christed Master Jesus carved a path that leads to this christed reality in you, and this begins with the Illumination of your soul.

The blessed Holy Light shall encompass you, it shall be infused into you, it shall awaken you, it shall enkindle the spark within, letting it shine brightly. This Holy Light of Christ shall fill your life and transform your entire being. It will guide you upon the paths of righteousness, and you shall indeed prosper. You shall partake of God's Wisdom and Truth, and you shall go forth into the world of darkness, shining the Holy Light unto all souls, and those who seek its wonder and beauty shall be led to the God within. This, then, is the Virtuous Path that can guide you into the Holy Light, for in essence, this is the activity of your soul unfoldment.

When the Light shines from within you, the emanation of Soul Virtues will begin to resonate within you.

This is a Virtuous Path because it is righteous. It is a Virtuous Path of the Righteousness of the Christos, in which you will discover the mystical Holy Light. It is mystical because you will penetrate into the unseen by way of a universal path into the Divine Source, YOUR divine source, into the God of your true Being. This Light is Holy because it leads you to the Most Holy One, the Divine Creator of All. It is by this Holy Light that you shall learn to see and experience your innermost reality, your true Self. Although you identify with your lower nature in the beginning, you must become receptive to your higher divine nature within. This ego or lower nature must be tamed and assimilated by the true Self.

This material form was intended to be a living temple that houses the God-Spirit within it.

The process is to take the unenlightened consciousness that you thought you were and awaken it from its long slumber in the world of illusion. The fact is, there is only one Consciousness, which is of God, but each individual has claimed a portion for himself and has made it his own. Through the free will, each one must decide his own fate. By trials and tribulations experienced through countless lifetimes, as a Prodigal Son, he learns that his own way is deceptive and fruitless. He soon learns that the only virtuous path is God's Way of Righteousness.

This is the beginning of the Path, to allow your awakening to take place, so that you will eventually realize who and what you truly are. The Holy Light is the path by which you travel to awaken and realize your true nature in the universe and in creation, and especially your true nature and being in God. You must come to open your spiritual sight and all of your higher senses, and to expand your consciousness in order to see and experience this Holy Light. You must learn to see it because you cannot see your true Self in darkness. If you are spiritually blind, you cannot see anything. Once the dross around the soul begins to clear away, and the blinders start coming down, you will begin to see a glimmer of Light. And then when you see this indwelling Light become brighter and brighter, as the old patterns and blocks begin to fall away, then you will start seeing the deeper reality within, leading to the God within, or what on the Mystical Path we call the God-Self.

You are sons and daughters of God, those who will become christed and illumined aspirants of the Christos. For the Christos, the Divine Word, the Solar Logos has spoken through exterior forms, through Jesus and other great teachers and sages, and has manifested Itself into lower vibration, so that the dense physical world and mankind's consciousness can be raised in vibration. This can become the Word made flesh through you, the Christos expressing through your life, including each and every sincere aspirant, but for this to be real to you or anyone, you must be awakened into a much fuller potential for the inner Christ to express through your outer form.

All who are truly awakened will manifest this Christ-reality in this world, to assist in its further awakening and Illumination. Mankind is an organism consisting of billions of cells, yet only one Spirit resides within this greater body, and that is the Spirit of God. The individual separations are an illusion. In truth, all of us have one Source and exist in one Mind and one Spirit of God. All sincere seekers and aspirants on this path will shine the Light to those who seek it.

Although God's living spark is within each human being, the difference is that many beings are still asleep and unawakened to this reality, and then there are those who are awake and illumined and have realized the presence of God within themselves. Then they can more fully function as servants of God, and eventually they will be able to live in this highly awakened consciousness, this Christ Consciousness. This is the Mind of Christ, that which the Master Jesus merged with when He experienced the oneness with the Creator, for He said, "I and my Father are one." –John 10:30

During his ministry years, Jesus was a shining example of this Oneness, for which he earnestly and lovingly will lead you if you let him. He came to show all of us that we are all sons and daughters of God. And as children of God, together we enter the Path of Divine Sonship, which in reality is Christhood, where you will express your true Christ-being. This is the path the Master Jesus guides you on, and if it were not so, this path would be pointless. If you aren't allowed to follow in his footsteps, this journey would be meaningless. If you cannot reach the goals that he reached, this path would be fruitless. For Jesus said, "The works that I do shall he do also, and greater than these shall he do." –John 14:12

The greatest example of this is his demonstration of divine unity in his life, that he and the Father are one. This is the path of all aspirants as well, and it is a virtuous one. You should come to live it and demonstrate it to others as well. You can become the shining examples of a virtuous path

of life, one of harmony and unity with your brothers and sisters, that all of us shall be sons and daughters together in the Light of the Christos. Hence, by walking this Virtuous Path you will be led into the Holy Light of the Christos.

Let us explain what we mean by righteousness. First, let's put aside the negative concept of self-righteousness that is essentially arrogance and is the opposite of humility. Also, it has nothing to do with the claim that you are right in your particular beliefs, which is often the premise of proselytization, another erroneous concept. In fact, normally you have to admit it when you are wrong. The end five

It takes becoming humble to become a truly righteous person. Therefore, in true righteousness you are acquiring right-mindedness, or a more correct way of being, one of high moral standards, but more importantly, it is the way of living a spiritual life, the way of being a virtuous aspirant on the path, the way of worshiping and adoring the Creator, for you are reaching toward God's Righteousness. It is the way of purity and wholeness of being. It is the way for the human being to become a divine being, hence, it is the path to entering Divine Union with God.

At the end of this course, we offer an exercise program so that you may observe and contemplate ten wonderful Virtues in your life.



Lesson II

Virtues of the Soul

When an aspirant follows a virtuous way of life, this obviously includes actual righteous Virtues, of which there are many. However, in this course we will focus on ten in particular, which are Gratitude, Patience, Humility, Compassion, Service, Kindness, Purity, Sincerity, Detachment, and Faith.

There is a point where you more seriously incorporate such Virtues into the way you think, speak, and act, and in the very way you live. If you commit your life to the Creator through these Virtues, your life will be transformed.

Any righteous virtue can be observed and applied in your life, which are attributes that reflect God's Holiness. For the divine alchemy expressed here is the human being transforming into the divine being. This is the essence of the Philosopher's Stone. To the Christian Mystic, this true Stone of the Wise is the Christos.

As you consciously strive to live in the way of a particular set of Virtues, these will become ingrained into your very nature, replacing any negative vices you may have, slowly but surely of course. You are learning to allow your soul to reflect the true inner quality of being that manifest as these Virtues. So as you learn to live them, this virtuousness that is already within will express outward, through your thinking, speech, actions, and lifestyle.

These soul Virtues are being activated as you observe and practice them. As the Light shines from within, all Virtues emanate forth and become real when you become aware of them and apply them.

Practicing these soul Virtues in your life are part of spiritual growth. Essentially, you are applying Virtues that will guide you toward a closer intimacy with the God within.

With purity, you are striving to become purified before God, hence becoming pure of heart. With humility, you are striving to be humble before God. With service, you strive to serve God by serving mankind. With compassion, you are learning to be compassionate and sympathetic to others. And so on.

Let's clarify some misunderstandings. Some doctrines claim that you can reach toward a state of perfection, becoming perfect, but what does this really mean? Is this even a realistic goal, or does it put reaching God too high on a pedestal, which is practically unreachable? If the path to perfection is a heaven-bound staircase, how many steps of perfection do you need to climb? One hundred? A thousand? A million? How far away is true perfection?

To think that you can completely fulfill these Virtues in your lifetime, to live up to some high standard of perfection, is too lofty of an expectation and is unrealistic. The concept of perfection is too abstract, and it must be replaced with the idea of harmony. Perfection pushes a goal far into the future and becomes practically unattainable. It is easier to acquire a feeling of harmony. In this way you are reaching spiritual harmony by applying these Virtues. We will use the analogy of

weighing scales, and when the mass within each scale is equal in weight, they have reached a balance. However, in your soul unfoldment, you are endeavoring to maintain this equilibrium, to reach a state of spiritual harmony. When you practice these Virtues of the Soul, this harmony can become a tangible reality that you will be able to perceive and experience. Indeed, there will be times when the scales will be somewhat offset when mistakes are made or you face temptations, but you have the ability to reach equilibrium again.

Practicing and living these Virtues are a continual striving. If you make mistakes in your thoughts, words, or actions, you learn from them; you pick yourself up and move on, while striving to apply the Virtues. However, when you begin to express them and live them seriously in your life, then they shall take root and transform you. This is because you have directed the energy of these Virtues toward God, to draw yourself closer to your Creator, so that you may grow toward the divine unity all true mystics seek. These Virtues become holy as you begin to realize the God within. In this way these holy Virtues are transformative in nature. They are tools of sacred alchemy.

When an aspirant applies these soul Virtues in his or her everyday life, the benefits are inexhaustible because these are the fruits of the Spirit, by which you will receive God's abundance.

Let's point out here that real prosperity and abundance have little to do with the physical world, although this is how most people attempt to manifest these. Living a spiritual life and practicing Virtues is the true way to receive prosperity and abundance. How does this abundance manifest in your life? This comes to you as God's Light, Love, Peace, Harmony, Joy, Wisdom, Grace, and Freedom, Unity, to name a few.

Living these Virtues of the soul allows God's grace to enter your life. Think of these Virtues as seeds being planted in the fertile soil of your garden, and when they take root and grow into beautiful crops, you will be entering harmony with God, and the Light will shine within you more clearly. This demonstrates a sacred alchemical process. If you consciously live them, then these virtues shall truly manifest their full grace upon you, and they shall grow and bear much fruit.

When you sincerely apply the Virtues, and not just as a mental exercise, they will manifest in your life and guide you in further. As you strive to *live* them in your life in a sincere, heartfelt manner, consciously striving to let them work in your thoughts, words, and actions, then they have become real to you, and the sacred alchemy is truly working within you in a fuller way so that transformation will take place. You may observe a Virtue and admire it, but when you take it seriously and truly apply it, then it becomes real.

Don't get caught up in thinking you have too many Virtues to work with or that it's too heavy a load. Applying one at a time is the easiest way to proceed. Remember Jesus said, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is Light." –Matthew 11:30. These Virtues are not as heavy or complicated as many may believe. They reflect Jesus Christ's yoke of easiness, for his burden is the light of holiness. We take the double meaning of "light" seriously here. These Virtues are not bonds of slavery, but are doors of freedom for the soul. They are not heavy shackles to hold you down, but they are avenues of holy expression to lift you up and transform you. And they are yokes of easiness and freedom, by which to enter the full Light of Christ.

The following are explanations of each Virtue:

Gratitude is when you feel and express being grateful and thankful for something or someone. It is the awareness and realization that something great and wonderful happened, and then expressing that. It's a way of imparting recognition, appreciation, and praise to others for some positive act. It is imparting grace and blessing to them. Essentially you are blessing them. You are

aware of something wonderful that took place or a good deed done, so you are acknowledging this publicly, or verbally to another, or even writing a letter of gratitude to another. This attitude of thankfulness is also a sincere feeling as it should be, not just empty words spoken to another because you think they want to hear this. In this sense sincerity is an important component of gratitude. You can conduct an exercise where you think of several things that you are grateful for. People often reserve this for the Thanksgiving holiday, but it's best to do this on a daily or weekly basis. You may be thankful for the job you have, or perhaps the pleasant weather that day, the beauty of nature around you, a good deed someone did for you, a positive act a group of people did, and so forth. In truth, you are acknowledging the energy and emanations from the Creator into this earthly plane through other people, for all souls are expressions of this Divine Consciousness. When you are sincerely thankful for something, God is expressing this through you. When you are thanking someone, you are blessing them, rather, God is blessing them through you, *as* you. Ultimately, you can express gratitude toward God for everything he has given you, and will give you.

Patience is so important in this fast-paced world, as you feel you have to accomplish tasks or arrive somewhere immediately. Impatience and discontent have led people into misfortune, failure, and disaster. As long as you are caught up in "time," a very deceptive quality of worldliness, you will continue in disharmony with others as well as yourself. As you keep patience in mind and practice it often, you shall notice a remarkable difference, and you will begin to slow down and relax, and to feel no real need for haste. Learning relaxation is the key to developing patience. Remember, in this world, time dictates deadlines, and that all things eventually come to an end. So impatience has become the paradigm. You must wake up from this unreal world and begin living in the Eternality of God's Reality. You think you live in the "ordinary time" of this world, but your soul exists in Eternity. If you experience life in this relaxed way of patience, since you have all Eternity, you can proceed in freedom from the clutches of the limiting mass mind of mankind.

Humility can be expressed by Jesus when he said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." –Matthew 5:5. Meekness is actually humility in spirit. When you suspend the ego and put yourself aside, allowing only God to express through your life, this is humility, and humility leads to great power. For when the power and authority of God come through, those bearing it shall inherit the Earth, which is actually symbolic of mastering life in this earthly world. When one expresses only his ego, he will fall into despair, for he has fallen victim to the deceitful ways of the world. When you only desire God's Will in your life, God's Truth, God's Life, God's Way, and God's Everything, then you are growing in true humility in spirit. Arrogance and aggressiveness have no place on the spiritual path, because they are vices that work against the Virtue of humility.

When you are humble before God, you are truly obedient to God, for the will of the ego has gotten you very little, and listening to God's Will within will give you the spiritual abundance you have been looking for. It is when you put your needs last and put others' needs first in service to them, then you are expressing humility.

Compassion is the essential quality of true service from the heart. This is the love and warmth up-welling from the soul's depth to help, heal, bless, or aid another soul in whatever way is needed. This has always been a heart function. We're not referring to the physical organ of the heart, but the heart chakra which is an active energy center in the very middle of the chest. This heart center is like an unfolding rose that opens its petals not only to receive the glorious rays of the sun,

but to give forth of its Life, Light and Love to all others. The heart receives the Light and it gives it forth to others around you. When you go forth to serve, you receive of God's love and give it forth. Once you have felt and experienced true love, you can properly love others. This is why submitting to God's Will and relinquishing your own is very important. As you learn to surrender to God, you will indeed feel His wondrous love for you, and this will cause you to feel love and compassion for those in need. You want to share God with them, as you have experienced His Divine Presence within your heart and soul. It is when you have discovered something wonderful in your life, you wish to share it with others. An important function of compassion is when you are willing to feel their pain, to sympathize with them, and just listen to them. They need this emotional support through compassion before they can receive anything deeper. Quite often one in need may require food, warm clothes, shelter, medical attention, or a shoulder to cry on, etc. So compassion can descend to the darkest mundane levels, to raise it up and transform a negative circumstance into a positive one. This is the alchemy of compassion.

Service is a Virtue of real action, and likewise it is an expression of compassion. Actually, you can express all the Virtues through this medium. As you strive to serve God by serving mankind, all of the bases are covered. For when you express service in some form or another, you are expressing the other Virtues in your life. You can meditate on exactly how this works, and you won't have to ponder for very long to gain some genuine insight into this simple principle here.

Two verses from the Beatitudes of Jesus can express Service:

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” –Matthew 5:7

“Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” –Matthew 5:9

These are examples of service to humanity, and therefore you will be serving God as well, doing His Will, for He wants you to uplift others from the darkness of the world. When you are merciful to your brothers and sisters, this opens the door to forgiveness, healing, and blessing to them, for you are imparting to them God's Righteousness. And when you act as peacemakers to the people of the world, bringing only God's Peace to them, this dispels the disharmony, hatred, and greed that abounds. You must go forth and break the spell of darkness in the world, to let the LIGHT of CHRIST shine into it.

Although there are countless other Virtues beyond the ten that we have offered, many of them are subcategories of these. One of them is generosity, because it is an aspect of service, as you go forth to share and give unto your neighbor and all people.

“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.” –Luke 6:31

The Golden Rule has several different versions and is explained in various ways, but essentially it is generosity through service.

Generosity leads to abundance in your life, because the Spirit comes to those who give of themselves generously. So the more you give, the more you shall receive, and then you can give even more. We are not only talking about giving or sharing material things, but true giving is the giving of yourself to others, sharing who you are, living from your God-Self which will direct you in the paths of service to others. As you act as an example of virtuous living, and giving to them from

your heart and soul, they will open their eyes and hearts, and they shall awaken and be changed. This is the ideal; this is how a truly awakened and illumined soul can affect the people around him.

Kindness could be seen as a subcategory of service or compassion, but we will list it as its own Virtue because it is quite important. In this world there is not enough kindness, so this needs to be expressed more, especially through the other Virtues of compassion and service. Clearly this is another aspect of the heart, as you can express other virtues such as generosity, graciousness, mercy, courtesy, sympathy, etc. Likewise, this is an aspect of goodwill and giving of yourself to others. As a servant of God, when you see cruelty and hatred expressed in this world, your heart aches for those being victimized and you desire to reach out to help them. When you are in a place where you can go to them, wherever you live, you will automatically express kindness and comfort for them.

Purity is an aspect of surrendering to God. When you are consciously detaching yourself from worldliness, shedding the old ways, you are being purified by the living waters of life, and being purged by the radiant fire of the Christ-Light. You will begin to see how the Holy Light directly interacts in the unfoldment of the Virtues in your life. The Virtues assist the Light within, so symbolically you could say that many righteous Virtues are the rays that emanate from this shining Light from your soul.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” –Matthew 5:8

When you have been purified of all the dross within, the way is made clear, and you will see the Light, and the Light shall lead you to see God. This is a very sublime reality here, for the pure of heart will see the Face of the Father, the God-Self within. This directly correlates to the Initiation of Self-Realization, where the veil is rent and you see deep within your soul. This was symbolized at the end of Jesus Christ’s crucifixion where the physical temple’s veil was rent. Although he died, he was then reborn anew. And so shall we all.

Sincerity is very important as you walk the Mystical Path. This is the integrity of honesty as you apply certain spiritual disciplines and various Virtues in your life and essentially seek the truth of God. Many people in this world practice dishonesty and deceit, and when they lie to others, they are lying to themselves. Deceiving others will only lead to their own deception. This deceitfulness is poison to the soul and tends to block the Light within and growth in general. Although many endeavor to walk this path, they need to look within and see how sincere they are. Are they doing this for their own glory and attention? Are they doing it to acquire psychic powers or spiritual experiences? Are they walking this path for their own attainment and prestige? This is why humility can assist sincerity. When you become truly humble, you will also become sincere. Likewise, sincerity should be expressed through the attitude of gratitude, as mentioned earlier. As you will realize, many of these Virtues work together, hand-in-hand.

Detachment can be learned as you apply purity. Part of the purification process is detaching yourself from the things of the world. A positive way to do this is by giving of yourself, the way of service. As you give, you will receive. It is in holding back that will lead to things being taken away from you. When you become possessive of things, sooner or later you will lose them, or more essentially you will lose your contact with your true inner being, for you have blocked it with materiality. Sharing what you have, and giving to others will increase your own inner wealth and health. If you save yourself and your possessions, you risk losing them and yourself.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

–Mark 8:36

When you forget yourself in order to give unto others, you will be uplifted. Losing yourself saves yourself. The act of service to others will do this. Once again, this is another example of the interplay of various Virtues with each other.

An aspect of detachment is the attitude of spiritual poverty, that is, realizing that nothing belongs to you and that you actually own nothing, for all things belong to God. Even in your physical body and mind are on loan. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” –Matthew 5:3

In truth, when you realize that nothing belongs to you, you are emptying yourself through purification, becoming poor in spirit, surrendering yourself to God, and this is when you receive the kingdom of heaven, which is within your own soul.

Faith is usually the first thing you learn in most religions. However, there is more than just believing in God and having faith that He is real. On the Mystical Path, when you apply certain spiritual principles, disciplines, and Virtues in your life, realization and deeper awareness of reality come to you, and then knowing is experienced. For example, when you have an epiphany of a deeper reality or an actual spiritual experience, initiatory or otherwise, your faith has led you to realization, which leads to inner knowing. When such an experience occurs in your soul, you will KNOW it is real. Faith led you to a realization of something deeper which led you to true knowing. The eyes will see the unseen and the ears will hear the unheard.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” –Hebrews 11:1

In referring to the substance and evidence of something you can’t see or hear, especially with your ordinary senses, continuous steadfast faith leads to the deeper realization and knowing that we speak of, wherein your inner eyes and ears will open.

Another important point is that faith means trusting God. Realize that God will never steer you wrong, although you might do that yourself. You might not trust yourself sometimes, so you might not trust yourself to trust God, because the ego is trying to thwart you. The ego thinks it knows what is best. It might tell you that doing something God’s way is not what you really want, or that it might be too hard, or some other excuse. You must trust that God knows what is best in your life, and He won’t make you do something beyond your ability. Indeed, sometimes God will guide you to do something difficult that will stretch your being, that will help you grow, and it is when you achieve that, you realize it was not beyond your capability after all.

Having faith in God means you trust God. This kind of faith is your rudder at the beginning of the journey, but it must unfold into realization and experience of the God-Self within. Therefore, you trust God to guide you in all ways in your life.

Through your example and expression of God’s Righteousness through the ten Virtues and the Holy Light in your life, you can indeed contribute greatly to the Plan of the Holy Work, of which you are all partakers.

If you wish to pursue this Path of the Holy Light more seriously, we encourage you to contemplate these ten Virtues, each one at a time, to see just how important they can be in your life as a growing aspirant on this Mystical Path. Your yearning for God will be greatly enhanced through these Virtues that can be expressed as a means of freedom from worldliness and its vices.



Lesson III

Virtues and the Light

These ten Virtues assist in opening yourself to the Holy Light of Christ. They act as avenues to the deeper reality of God in your life; therefore, they assist you on the Mystical Path that guides you to the Holy Light of your true being within. As mentioned earlier, there are many Virtues, and perhaps you can find others not on our list that might resonate with you; that is perfectly fine. If you want to apply these and some of the ten we offer, that is acceptable. But do you really want to have a long list of Virtues to work with? It depends on just how ambitious you want to be. On the other hand, you could switch some of them out with others you prefer, keeping them at ten, if you wish. But use intuition to decide which will be best for you. We are being flexible here, because there are many virtues that can be applied in your life. Let's consider other virtues, such as forgiveness, simplicity, integrity, generosity, confidence, sympathy, prudence, courtesy, perseverance, temperance, obedience, and frugality, to name a few. However, some of these can be viewed as subcategories within the existing ten Virtues. For instance, integrity is an aspect of sincerity; simplicity is an aspect of purity and also detachment; forgiveness, sympathy, and generosity are aspects of compassion and service. Many such virtues are interconnected and interwoven together, making for a large tapestry that comprises the whole Virtuous Path.

Hence, the Virtues are keys to unlocking deeper realities of the soul, for they are innate aspects of your soul. These Virtues of divine righteousness can assist in receiving the Christ-Light within you, and in increasing it further. For this very Light of Christ is the Way into the Holy of Holies, where resides the most sublime Holy Flame of Divine Being, the God-Self, as experienced in the initiation of the Rising of the God-Self, or Self-Realization.

These Holy Virtues and the Holy Light go hand in hand on this particular avenue of the Mystical Path. You may find other ways of finding God within, and there are many, but this way has proven to work very successfully.

When you have dedicated your life to God in a devotional way, you are walking the Straight and Narrow Road, by your own choice, because it leads you away from the deceitful and ensnaring ways of the world. You want to learn to become detached and indifferent to the temptations and enticing ways of the material world. The Holy Virtues through the Holy Light are the Way we have discovered to guide you out of this valley of the shadow of death. In truth, the way *out* is the way *IN*.

When you pursue purity to God, become humble before God, serve God, become compassionate to people in need, become sincere in your walk on this path, and so forth, these mystical avenues indeed prepare you and will open the floodgates of the Holy Light into your soul and whole being. The fulfillment of the Holy Light of Christ shall enter your body, mind, soul, heart, and entire being. For these holy attributes of the Creator are aspects of surrender unto Him. These Virtues are avenues by which you will express your love for your Beloved God within, by which the Holy Light will open your being to its true reality. Then on this Path you will be reaching toward

Divine Union. Although this may seem like an ultimate goal, experiencing oneness with the Creator, this seeming end is actually a new beginning for the continually unfolding soul. This is symbolized by the ancient symbol of the ouroboros, the snake that eats its own tail. Ends are merely new beginnings. When Jesus said, "I and my Father are one," he referred to Divine Union, which is the path all sincere aspirants are on. However, after he was crucified, resurrected, and ascended, he left the physical world and entered a higher reality, or what some may call the heaven world. There is no final end, only continual unfoldment of the soul. In the sublimity of higher realities, we exist Eternally throughout Infinity. Otherwise, existence would be rather bleak. Using an analogy that only 10,000 books exist in the world, wherein an avid bookworm has read them all, he has no choice but to reread them. After many years he has accomplished this. But then after he has read them for a third time, he wonders if more books exist. He asks around and finds out that is not so. Then he becomes sad for he still yearns to know more, for he wishes to continue to grow, to unfold inwardly. Because no further growth is allowed, he becomes depressed. Would you want to live in a world like that, where there is a stopping point where you can no longer grow any further? You become stagnant and depressed because there is nothing more to do. The sincere aspirant is glad to continue, to discover more realities beyond the one he is in.

Another analogy suggests the possibility that mankind will succeed in long-distance space travel and will be able to continually discover new worlds, beginning with this galaxy, and going on to the next, and then the next, and then the next, on and on with no end; for there will always be new worlds to discover in the realms of Infinity.

When we say the Virtues and the Light operate together, going hand-in-hand, realize that each person experiences life differently. Each soul is at a different point of unfoldment and needs certain elements for growth, and some move more slowly than others. As we have observed, some aspirants who are still seeking the Light need the Virtues in their lives, which will prepare them for receiving the Light of Christ, the Illumination. When the seeker observes them, contemplates on them, and applies them, the avenue to the Light will open to him. And if you were to contemplate on this, you will see how this is so. We are not saying these Virtues are the only way, but they are important elements that contribute to one's spiritual growth, among other factors as well. There are many forms of discipline and devotional avenues that will work, depending on the individual's needs. But these Virtues are the spiritual tools that work on this particular path.

Likewise, if an aspirant has already received the Illumination, he can continue to apply the Virtues in his life. In this way the Virtues will enhance his further unfoldment into the Holy Light as he enters deeper levels of reality. They act as avenues of grace for the growing aspirant. Likewise, all righteous virtues will guide his continued growth in the Light within, which will lead him to the realization of the true Self within. Hence, his growing unity with God has begun.

The many righteous virtues of the soul are like radiant sunrays that shine from the glorious Sun of the Christos within.

Wherever you are on the Mystical Path, the Virtues act as guiding principles to keep you on the straight and narrow path of a virtuous life.



Lesson IV

The Path of Initiation

What we have chosen to call the Path of the Holy Light is merely the Way of Illumination. In Christian Mysticism, as explained by certain mystic contemplatives, three levels are observed: the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way, and the Unitive Way. These essentially describe three graduating stages along the Initiatory Path, or the Way into God's Reality. Metaphysicians may call this reaching Cosmic Consciousness. In Christian Mysticism this is often called Christ Consciousness. The early monastics also referred to *Unio Mystica*, or Divine Union with God through Love. All of these are names for the same spiritual process, and various schools may observe or conduct this process a little differently.

The idea of incremental levels or stages of soul unfoldment has its place, but don't try to force some kind of false understanding as to how the mechanics of this works. Just know that it does work. It is more important that your devotional and intuitive side should be activated, hence, the heart must be open. The heart is the aspect of the soul that feels life around and within it as it yearns for something greater, something more, and this part of you desires to be fully awakened in the reality of God within. In truth, the Soul and the SELF are two aspects of the same Being that you are in reality. The soul is the sheath around the Self. The Soul is the exterior part, and the Self is the interior reality. The Soul is that which experiences life all around and within it, and the Self is the observer within. In analogy, let's say your soul is a portion of air surrounded by a soap bubble as it moves about. Soon it realizes something very special about this isolated air that it is, for it knows that there are countless soap bubbles like itself, and they all drift through the greater expanse of air. Realize there are not many airs, but only one air, and it is everywhere. Once the soap bubble pops, this small portion of air unites with the greater air around it. Hence, the soul has become one with God, for it has entered Divine Union.

The system of incremental stages can become misleading at times, and often aspirants form concrete ideas in their minds as to how certain stages must work. Often you might get caught up in fancy terminology and explanations, exhilarating rituals, or trying to figure out how far along you are on this path, and other unnecessary ideas. This Mystical Path is indeed a gradual unfoldment process, an expansion of your being and consciousness into the One Way of God's Reality. You may perceive them as separate levels, or something like steps along a staircase, but these ideas can be deceptive. This is similar to perceiving the so-called seven colors of the spectrum that the prism casts. Yet, ultimately there is only the One Light from which the colors are basically refractions. Aspirants often get caught up in the flashy colors and shades that make this unfoldment process so interesting, instead of pursuing the true source of the One Light of God's Being beyond the prism of the material mind of the world.

In Christian Mysticism you can seek and experience this reality of God's Light and Being

through the Master Jesus Christ as your mystic guide, if you so choose. On the other hand, you may choose to follow the way of some of the great sages, such as Gautama Buddha, Krishna, Melchizedek, Lao Tzu, Hermes Trismegistus, the Dalai Lama, or other great avatars and teachers, and any other supporters of the Ancient Wisdom Teachings; therefore, you can choose a particular mystical tradition of your choice. The point is, applying any true teachings and principles will lead you into the Holy Light and the God-Self of your own being.

Too often you grow accustomed to the apparent stages, that is, you feel that you are graduating from the Awakening level to the Illumination level, and then from here to the Self-Realization level, and so on. These are easy-to-understand modes of expression, yet you must realize these are simply facets of the total Path of Initiation. They seem to be linear on the physical level, but are actually cyclical. You will always be entering deeper levels of awakening, you will always be entering deeper levels of the Light, you will always be entering more deeply into the reality of the God-Self. Likewise, using a similar analogy, the aspirant begins by seeking, then he begins finding, and then he will give this to others. But the fact is he will always be seeking, he will always be finding more, and he will always be giving what he finds to others. This act of giving the teachings to others is the way of the teacher, for he has received the prerequisite initiations.

These levels of soul unfoldment can be seen as different aspects of the progressive function of Initiation along the Way into Godhood. In other words, you experience each of these levels in some form all along the way as you progress deeper into the Divine Consciousness of God.

It is interesting to view various other systems which easily coincide with one another. Let us look at two of these:

The Awakening	The Purgative Way
The Illumination	The Illuminative Way
Self-Realization	The Unitive Way

You can add to this the spiritual actions of seeking, finding, and giving. In the same way the stages of Initiation operate. Not so much as incrementally, but as integral aspects of the whole process. In other words, along the Mystical Path, you are always awakening further, you are always being purged and purified, you will always be receiving and experiencing more Light as you enter deeper into Illumination, and you are always unfolding into the realization of your true Self, and growing closer to the God within, and ascending deeper into Union with the Divine.

To clarify, although you may seek to be one with the God-Self from the beginning, at some point you come to actually *realize* that you are already *one* with the God within, but first you must go through your initial Awakening and Illumination.

Essentially, you are always in the process of realizing the Greater God of All, somewhere along the line, whether you are a beginner or an adept. Many may view it as a spectrum that leads from yourself to God, which is true to a point, but this concept suggests a separation that is not valid.

It is truer that ultimately your real Self and the Greater God are one and the same, hence, we often refer to this as the God-Self in order to keep things simple, and to avoid any such separations. This is the path of unfoldment that leads to Divine Union. Explaining these esoteric ideas quite often falls short of the true deeper reality. That is why intellectualizing them must be superseded by experiencing them instead.

Unfortunately, some seekers misunderstand this reality of reaching Divine Union, and instead some have reached a God-complex, a narcissistic attitude that often makes them believe they are the

direct channel of God on Earth, or think they are God Himself, although they are merely confusing the ego with God. Their lower nature has deceived them, which hinders them from the truth, from real union with the Divine.

Divine Union is integral to your growing Oneness with God and in reality you cannot separate your true Self from God, similarly to how the grains of sand are one with the whole beach.

The early Gnostic mystics knew that the way to God begins with yourself, for God resided within. “Man, know yourself,” is a popular ancient axiom which is the way to truth, for when you find your real Self, you have found truth, and this truth you will find is God. It is this Truth that will set you free.

Here we can tie this process up by explaining that you have sought the truth, and will always seek its deeper realities, hence you shall always be finding and experiencing the deeper truth of the God-Self within and all around, and then you shall always be giving and sharing this powerful truth with others as a dedicated servant on the Mystical Path, that they may too seek this truth, to continue finding it and to likewise give it unto others as you have done. It is a continually spiraling process, as one opens the door for another, and he opens the door for yet another, and so on, until the revealing Truth is multiplied further out into the rest of the world, like wildfire spreading forth that cannot be stopped. It is the Fire of the Holy Light that is spreading out into the world, until, one day, all of us will witness a World Illumination, that all people may be infused with the Holy Light. This is our sublime goal, and this is the Divine Plan, for all of us together as God’s Laborers are planting sacred seeds into the soil of the great field of the world, for it is held as a thought in the Mind of God, for this golden thread is woven into the very fabric of Creation in God’s Divine Design.

More laborers and Light-workers are needed in this Holy Work, and the Great Call has gone forth to bring in more, to plant more seeds that will initiate and bring into fruition the Illumination across the planet.

“Then saith he unto his disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.”
–Matthew 9:37-38



Lesson V

Factors of Soul Unfoldment

True virtuousness comes when you begin to awaken. To walk this Virtuous Path means you must first awaken to acknowledge the old ways that you must discard that have held you back from inner growth. Hence, you must be purged and purified of these earthly tempting ways of the flesh, and begin to live the ways of God's Righteousness. We have discussed how the Virtues are tangible ways to express and experience this Righteousness. These avenues of righteousness will assist in your further awakening and Illumination.

On the path of Christian Mysticism, the Master Jesus Christ is an important example of living a spiritual life that culminates in reaching divinity or becoming one with God. Although this philosophy of *unio mystica* is acknowledged in some other traditions and religions, specifically through the avenue of Initiation, it is not accepted by more fundamental and exoteric faiths.

Likewise, Jesus and John the Baptist popularized baptism, which became a common ritual in most if not all Christian churches. Unfortunately, this became a church membership arrangement; however, esoteric schools acknowledged the deeper levels of baptism as an initiatory step, especially as a way to prepare the aspirant for receiving the Light.

Your spiritual growth depends on various factors. In general, much of this revolves around taking up genuine spiritual disciplines, which centers around devotion to God. For starters, applying effective spiritual virtues allows for a tangible way to make this path real for you. Quite often the aspirant may be assailed by temptations and negative influences or desires, but when he focuses on positive virtues and regularly applies them, these negative elements will soon become less effective and then disappear. Likewise, applying disciplines that revolve around meditation and certain spiritual exercises are important aspects of spiritual growth. Your openness and attitude are important here, because when you treat such disciplines as drudgery, like something you feel you have to do, then that's the wrong approach. This process becomes a positive spiritual lifestyle that you are passionate about, since it will lead you into a deeper intimacy with the Creator and eventually Divine Union. Similarly, when a budding artist realizes he has real talent, his passion increases and then he learns and trains to become the best artist he can possibly be. If he feels this process is drudgery and finds himself struggling with it, he will probably not become a great artist.

One of the initial factors in the unfoldment process is purification, to learn to discard the old ways and replace them with the new ways of righteousness. This is an ongoing process of continual transformation. Another factor is to allow the true yearning for God to awaken within, which is essentially love for the Divine. Surrender will develop from this, which is another essential factor in spiritual growth. In fact, you will see the soul quality of surrender interwoven throughout the ten Virtues if you contemplate them from this perspective. For they open the doors for you to more easily surrender over to God.

God's grace is a key factor as well, for without this, without the help and guidance of God,

you will not go very far at all. With God all things are possible, and you depend on God's strength, power, and love to flow through you, to move you onward. The effort from your disciplines is important, as it puts you in the right place, to make you available for God to guide and move you, so His grace will carry you through. You can do nothing of yourself, but if you let God do it through you, that is the secret. To use an analogy, it is like one who lives near the beach. He desires to get a suntan. He will not ever get this tan if he never goes out to lie on the beach under the sun. So he must make an effort. He must leave his house and drive to the beach. Once he does this, he can relax and let the sun do the rest of the work. This illustration demonstrates your own effort and then God's grace in action once you have put yourself in the right place. You can also liken this to one who maintains an exercise and nutrition program for good health and staying in shape. The individual jogs every morning, works out at the gym a few times a week, eats healthy food, and so on. This becomes a regular, automatic pattern soon, which seems to take less effort after a while. Because of this discipline physical balance and health is achieved, which only could happen by God's grace at work.

Essentially, when you step out and take action, divine energy from within is activated and your spiritual unfoldment will proceed and maintain, as long as you keep up the discipline. Grace is this divine energy that is activated.

Another factor is the formula of three keys to spiritual unfoldment: yearning for God, service to mankind, and attainment of self. These act as three spiritual directions that are interconnected, as we have spoken of in other lessons. Likewise, you will see how the Virtues interact with these three keys as you apply them, and you can meditate on this as well to get deeper insight.

Another factor is to find a true teacher who will guide you on this Mystical Path and will offer a program of discipline that should work best for you. Although there are those who have chosen a solitary path, and this may work well for some, there are others you may feel drawn to a teacher. The main rule of thumb is that everyone experiences life differently. There are many methods and disciplines, so you should find the right one for you. For example, one method of meditation may work well for one aspirant but may not for you. Usually, the teacher will help you find the best method of meditation or exercise that works best for you. And sometimes one method will run its course, having succeeded in opening certain spiritual faculties in you, and then it is time to use another method for a while. Such methods run their course, and then you would start a different one.

So you can find a teacher who resonates with your soul. One who will help you to initiate the other factors, so that everything will fall into place.

Again, some have chosen to walk their spiritual path alone without a teacher's guidance, or without belonging to a spiritual group, but they can succeed as long as they align themselves with the God-being within for guidance. However, if they have a difficult time achieving this and find themselves floundering, that's when they need a teacher to guide them.

The spiritual teacher has a function and a purpose, which is basically to guide you and uplift you. He wishes that you become an active servant of God, an illumined worker of the Light that shines to others in need. This is one of his goals for you.

The teacher must allow them to blossom forth and grow to their fullest potential possible. So if any of his students advance to become ministers, priests, or teachers in a particular school, then this teacher has truly succeeded in his task. Of course, such titles basically express the genuine inner soul advancement that has taken place.

He also realizes that these are not his students, but they are God's students, and he is only

mediating between God and the student. His job is not to expect obedience from his students, but he can merely guide them in the right direction, and help them to listen to the voice within, for hearing God within is the goal.

Therefore, the factor of the teacher in the aspirant's unfoldment process can be seen as an avenue of grace, especially if he has struggled alone without one for a while. Again, walking the spiritual path as a solitary soul can be accomplished, but it doesn't work for everyone; some are called to it, and some are called to find a teacher. As the old saying goes, "When the student is ready, the teacher will arrive."

All of these factors of soul unfoldment together configure to initiate the awakening and Illumination process for the aspirant, and further growth as well, through the further stages of Initiation. In this way, the aspirant can successfully walk the Mystical Path, toward greater unfoldment and eventually union with the Creator, the sublime goal of the true mystic. This is when he has truly become a master teacher who can lead others on this path. Many students have the potential to become priests and master teachers someday, for all teachers were students once. The true teacher looks for this quality in the student, above all. Why is this? Because he wishes to share the true Divinity within with all others. He seeks to share deeper wisdom with them and to help them grow spiritually. Just as he has carried the torch that shines the Light to others, he hopes that you too will carry this torch as well.

The teacher has taught the Ancient Wisdom to others that have set them free, so he hopes that you too will share this wisdom with others and set them free. We are talking about the wisdom of the path of the Light through the unfoldment process, which reveals a deeper reality to you. Too many people are not yet free who yearn to be. It takes many spiritual workers to do the work required in this dense physical world. Remember that the harvest is plenteous, but there are few laborers, which means the harvesting work needs more laborers and Light-workers.

As stated before, The Holy Work that will lead to World Illumination is part of the Divine Plan, but it requires more workers. Indeed, there have been great teachers, sages, and avatars throughout the ages, some known, some unknown, who have committed to the work of uplifting the consciousness of mankind to a higher level. Also, many followers and mystics on the path have done the same. We're not talking about the aggressive actions of proselytizing, to force your beliefs on others. It is up to each individual to choose their own path rather than being coerced by others. We are referring to allowing the message to be available to others, and in this case, the message of spreading the Light, the path of carrying the torch, the way of freeing souls so that they may realize their true Divine Source within.



Lesson VI

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Mystical Path is a virtuous one indeed, and any true path will awaken and illuminate you, and the Holy Light will reveal your true God-Being to you. This divine Light of God dispels the darkness and cuts through the veil so that you will see who you truly are. You will realize you are not the outer ego-based self at all, but the inner, higher Self which is the spark of divine life, a holy ray of God within your being. The essence of what you are is God.

Let us offer an analogy. Let's say you go to the beach and watch the ocean waves crash up against a long ridge of large rocks, and a mighty spray shoots up into the air. This spray consists of countless water droplets that rise up from the waves, and then fall back and once again reunite with the water from whence they came. These waves continually break against the rocks, over and over again in a cyclical manner. Your individualized life seems long to you, but in the scope of eternity, this apparent separation is but a moment, just as the countless drops within the spray are only momentarily separated from their source. In truth, there is no real separation. There is no real disconnection from your source. Such compartmentalizing is an illusion created by the finite mass mind of this world that has submerged itself in materiality and limitation for too long now, which are illusions also. This is why you must realize that the Light is REAL.

This radiant Holy Light is closer than you think, for God is closer than you think. God is closer than hands and feet. You do not have to search far, but only right inside yourself. As Jesus declared, the kingdom of God is within you, and this is where you find God, your divine source.

“The Creator and I are one,” is a key to this realization.

The real work with these Virtues begins with the contemplative exercise we will offer below. Therefore, may your continued unfoldment proceed smoothly on this Virtuous Path!



Observance and Contemplation of the Ten Virtues

This process is very simple. Begin as you would in conducting a spiritual exercise or meditation, sitting in a straight-backed chair, perhaps at your altar.

First, focus on the Ten Virtues in this contemplation exercise, and later if you wish, try other virtues that exist, especially ones that truly resonate with you, which means they will resonate with your inner growth. In other words, at this point you could take certain ones from the ten and take others that you feel right about, and use these as your personal Virtues. We don't want to create a hard and fast structure with only the ten we have chosen, because everyone is different. Let your soul guide you in what works best.

Each day focus on a particular Virtue and contemplate it, gleaning deeper wisdom, gaining a deeper understanding of its scope, and how to best apply it in your life. The next day move on to another virtue. Depending on your personal schedule, if you wish to choose early morning or late at night for this contemplation, this is up to you. When these Virtues begin to truly resonate with you as you apply them, you will definitely begin living this Virtuous Path.

We suggest that you try another approach as well, perhaps after the ten days of contemplation, or however many days you choose, each week practice applying one particular virtue, being fully aware of what you are doing throughout the day as you do so, seeing how you can use it in your thoughts, actions, and words, and lifestyle in general. Let the soul quality of this virtue express itself as the Light within shines forth from your center. Remember that these Virtues assist you in receiving the Light.

For example, applying gratitude, learn to be grateful and thankful for the many things in your life, rather than focusing on negative things that are basically judgments. When you see the negative traits in things or people, that doesn't help your growth.

If you take this process seriously and sincerely, you will receive much, and you will become diligent in walking the Mystical Path.

Do not think of such exercises as dreary disciplines that you have to do, but as beneficial practices that can become a joyous spiritual lifestyle for you, as is the case with other disciplines we have arranged in these courses of study. In fact, in regards to this, applying these Virtues will affect your attitude in a more positive manner, because a positive attitude in this process is important.



Soul Unfoldment on the Virtuous Path was written by Rt. Rev. Matthew Martin, BT, D.D.
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